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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 001891

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [CH](#) [PREL](#) [SU](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [SP](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN'S VIEWS IN ADVANCE OF THE MAY 23 EU FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING

REF: A. STATE 90085

[1](#)B. MADRID 1879

Classified By: Political Counselor Kathleen Fitzpatrick for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Poloff discussed the China Arms Embargo, European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), and Sudan with Carlos Fernandez-Arias, MFA EU Policy Coordinator (and Special Assistant to MFA Political Director Dezcallar) on May [1](#)7. Fernandez-Arias does not expect the China Arms Embargo to be lifted this year, and he claimed Spain's position regarding the arms embargo remains unchanged, despite Defense Minister Bono's personal opposition to lifting the embargo (Ref B). The GOS believes that recent NATO and EU cooperation in Bosnia proves that NATO and the EU can work together well. EU states agree with the U.S. agenda in Sudan and are waiting to hear what type of logistical support is needed by the African Union. The Middle East Peace Process and budgetary issues will also be discussed during the May 23 Foreign Ministers Meeting (GAERC). END SUMMARY.

//CHINA ARMS EMBARGO//

[1](#)2. (C) Fernandez-Arias does not foresee a lifting of the China Arms Embargo during the Presidencies of Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. EU states have agreed that there must be significant movement on both human rights and political reform in China before the conditions will be right for the lifting of the arms embargo (a point Moratinos alluded to in his speech before the U.S.-Spain Council May 14 - see Ref B). Fernandez-Arias said the issue of the China Arms Embargo would not be discussed at the GAERC meeting on May 23. He added that EU member states would like to continue dialogue with the U.S. and address U.S. concerns over China before agreeing to end the arms embargo. Poloff emphasized to Fernandez-Arias that discussions of the U.S.- EU Strategic Dialogue on East Asia in Brussels on May 23 would not be a negotiation with the EU, but rather a discussion of strategic issues in East Asia, including China's military build-up. Fernandez-Arias confirmed to Poloff that Spain's mid to long-term view of the China Arms Embargo remains unchanged. Basically, Spain favors a lifting of the China Arms Embargo with an enhanced code of conduct after China delivers political and human rights reforms. (Embassy Comment: Fernandez-Arias' comment about Spain's position on the China Arms Embargo likely is not the final word on this issue now that the popular and influential Bono has publicly put forward his personal opposition to lifting the embargo. We will use Bono's opening to press the Spanish for a more favorable position on the embargo as the GOS seeks to improve ties with the U.S.)

//ESDP//

[1](#)3. (C) Fernandez-Arias told Poloff that Foreign Ministers would discuss elements of NATO and EU cooperation in Bosnia. Spain believes in the Berlin-Plus arrangements and welcomes further cooperation between NATO and the EU. Fernandez-Arias added that Bosnia was a good example of how NATO and the EU can work together.

//SUDAN//

[1](#)4. (C) Fernandez-Arias told Poloff that Spain agrees completely with U.S. objectives in Sudan. He told Poloff that EU members expected African Union President Alpha Oumar Konare to ask for both financial and logistical support in Sudan during his current meetings in Brussels.

//OTHER ISSUES//

[1](#)5. (C) The Middle East Peace Process will likely be discussed in Brussels, according to Fernandez-Arias. The discussions will likely focus on finding a European deputy for Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn.

[1](#)6. (C) Fernandez-Arias told Poloff that few external political issues would be discussed. Discussions at the GAERC meeting would likely focus on financial perspectives concerning the current EU budget debate, defense cooperation and ESDP developments, and budgetary issues concerning EU economic development and cooperation initiatives in the third world.
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